

II. Remarks

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-16 and 18-24 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 13, 16, 19, 20, and 24 are independent.

Claims 13-15 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for the reasons discussed on page 2 of the Office Action. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection on the ground that the person of ordinary skill in the art would not be confused as to the meaning or scope of the claims. Nevertheless, these claims have been amended for clarity with respect to the specification and Drawings, and not in response to any statutory requirement.

Claims 1-16 and 18-24 were rejected as being unpatentable over Von Holdt '897 and Von Holdt '357, for the reasons discussed on pages 2-4 of the Office Action. Applicant respectfully traverses all art rejections.

Each of independent Claims 1, 5, 7, 13, 16, 19, 20, and 24 recites a novel combination of structure and/or function whereby the neck ring non-slidingly lifts (or maintains contact with) the preform (or molded article) during a portion of the ejection operation. See for example the embodiment of Figs. 7-8 and paragraphs [0056] and [0057] of the subject application.

In contrast, in Von Holdt '897, the inner mold member 38 slides upward on the outer surface of the molded bucket 10 so that the projections 40 can clear the flange 14 before moving outward. (See the small upward arrow in inner mold member 38 in Figs. 5a and 5b. See also Col. 4, lines 22-25). Therefore, Von Holdt '897 fails to disclose or suggest structure and/or function whereby the neck ring non-slidingly lifts (or maintains contact with) the preform (or molded article) during a portion of the ejection operation.

Independent Claim 3 recites a novel combination of structure and/or function whereby the first lifting structure is configured to move the lock ring and the neck ring a first distance in a lifting direction, and the second lifting structure is configured to allow the lock ring to remain ***stationary and to move the neck ring a second distance in the lifting direction from said lock ring.*** For example, the embodiment of Figs. 7-8 and paragraphs [0056] and [0057] of the subject application. In contrast, none of the cited references, including Von Holdt '897, discloses or suggestsw structure and/or function whereby the second lifting structure is configured to allow the lock ring to remain stationary and to move the neck ring a second distance in the lifting direction from said lock ring.

In view of the above, it is believed that this application is now in condition for allowance, and a Notice thereof is respectfully requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 625-3507. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Richard P. Bauer", written over a horizontal line.

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